

Ms. A. 1. 1. 1. 11
Leicester, Tuesday Dec. 12, 1837.

My dear Sir & friend,

I am indebted to you for 2 letters since I wrote you last. The first in reply to some questions I had asked you respecting Mr. Garrison & Mr. Phelps. On this subject I received, ten days since, a letter from Mr. P., (written in consequence of a suggestion from you) which set the whole matter in a different & a better light - I doubt not, the true one. I have shown, at his desire, the letter to a number of the men who had heard the other statement - (which went to make out Mr. Garrison to be as arrant a hypocrite as ever lived). and I mean to do so to still more, and I have reason to think it will do some good in this particular.

Your other letter was rec^d. last Wednesday night on my return home from the Ministers' Convention on Slavery at Worcester - which held thro' 2 days. I wished to have written you immediately after that Convention, & given you some acc't. of it; but it has been impossible to do so before this; - and now I must hasten or lose this Mail. Perhaps my account will come too late to be acceptable, - as I suppose Mr. Phelps has published somewhere, some account of the doings ⁱⁿ the Convention, before this. I have seen none, however.

There were 74 ministers present, as Members, at that Convention. Mr. Fiske of New Braintree, a man of whom you have doubtless heard, was elected President. There were men of all degrees of Anti Slavery present. Consequently, to suit all, became or somewhat

difficult matter. There were a few present, headed by Mr. Miller, pastor of the South (Orthodox) Church in Worcester, who were determined to frustrate, if possible, the purposes for which the Convention had come together, & who perceptibly allowed their personal jealousies to influence their opinions of ~~the~~ whatever ^{course} was recommended ~~to~~ to be taken by the Convention.

From as attentive observation as I could give, (and I can assure you I was never before - for so long a time - so completely absorbed in any subject) it is my full opinion that the great majority of the Convention desired -

First. To have unanimous action - or as nearly so as possible. To secure this, they were willing to concede so far, and no farther, as ^{their} convictions of truth & duty would permit. They were willing that every thing which might intimate, by any tolerable construction, more than the naked truth, and every thing which was thought in any degree to be liable to be misunderstood, might be omitted from whatever Declaration of Views the Convention should put forth. They wished for nothing that would not bear the closest investigation. But they wished, also and

Second. To put forth a declaration of Views, couched in such language - eloquent & forcible - as would command attention. They did not wish a string of dry Resolutions, such as almost nobody reads - except those deeply interested in the subject.

Such a Declaration had been drawn up ^{by Mr. Allen of Shrewsbury} & was presented by the Business Committee of the Convention. That is, the Declaration was such, as I have supposed was desired, in these respects, that it was forcible & eloquent, & so beautifully written that it could not fail to command public attention. There probably was this fault in it - in some minor particulars - ~~that~~ (as was charged against it) that it was not definite & clear eno'. ~~is~~ Another charge made by it (how extensively it was considered a just charge, I do not know with certainty; I am inclined to think however by a considerable number - say 20 to 25) was that it was "overwrought", as a picture of Slavery. Such was not the opinion of the majority; I am confident.

I have thus stated the 2 main things, as I believe them, desired by the Majority. - They found it impossible, I regret to say it, to secure both points. The minority, headed by Mr. Miller as I said, declared that, alter prune, amend Mr. Allen's Declaration 'as you may, we never will consent to it. You cannot put it in a form with which we shall be satisfied.' To this point they did not come till late in the P.M. of the 2^d day; and as one vote had shown that Mr. A.'s Declaration ~~can~~ would not receive the votes of more than a slender majority, without considerable changes - (such, as I said before, as would involve no compromise of principle -) it was determined to adjourn. Accordingly they adj. to meet as soon after the 1st of January as possible. A Comtee of Eleven was appointed to sit in the recess, & prepare a new Address, or something equivalent - & to call, when they were ready, the

Convention together again.

The Convention passed a Resolution, & to this effect, that holding men in Slavery was contrary to the Gospel and ought to be universally abandoned - and that it was the duty of Ministers to use their influence & exertions to this end. This may be considered as the unanimous voice of the Convention; for, although there were two Members who voted against it, they did so on the ground that there was something in the Resolution which favored a new Anti-Slavery Society or Organization,

some sketches of Speeches, &c. in the Convention. - ^{but} I am not sorry to be prevented from speaking in default of some discharges of "brotherly feeling" between 1 or 3 orthodox ministers, enough.

Saml. May
Dec. 12. 1837

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Rev. Saml. May.

South Scituate.

(Mass.)

not that the principles laid down in the Resolⁿ were not, in their opinion, true. One is a firm Abolitionist, the other, your friend Mr. Sullivan, who entered his name as one of the Com^{tee}, but it was thought a member of the Society, ought not to sit as a member. You see I cannot now answer the questions you propose to me in your last letter - I will endeavour to write you again soon, answering them. I should have been glad to have given you